

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE EINEZ YAP

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the late Einez Yap.

Einez Yap, who passed away unexpectedly on May 18, 2005, was a quintessential community activist who went about helping others in a quiet and dignified manner. Her passing is tragic, not just to her family, but to all those who knew her.

She was the visionary behind the establishment of LEASA Industries in 1977, when it began as a small family-owned business. Since its humble beginnings in Liberty City, the company has grown to become one of the largest growers of bean and alfalfa sprouts and one of the largest manufacturers of tofu and suppliers of fresh fruits and vegetables in the state of Florida.

A dutiful partner and wife to George Yap, President/CEO of LEASA Industries, Einez was a doting mother and proud grandmother. Her business acumen was instrumental in enabling LEASA Industries to become a recipient of the prestigious National Minority Manufacturer of the Year Award for 1997–1998 and the acknowledgement of LEASA Industries as one of Florida's fastest growing private companies by the University of Florida's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The tremendous success that Einez enjoyed in business, however, was secondary to her impact as a community leader. A member of several community organizations, Mrs. Yap was the resilient president of the Chinese Cultural Foundation and founder of the Organization of Chinese Americans, as well as the untiring entrepreneur spearheading the annual celebration of the Chinese New Year Festival in Miami-Dade County for the past decade. Additionally, she served on the Board of the Asian-American Federation of Florida, as well as Advisory Council of the National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Young (NANAY), Inc. She has been the patroness and benefactress of many more community organizations that are at the forefront of seeking equality of opportunity for minority groups; and she has been a featured leader for the Miami-Dade Community Relations Board as it deals with the challenge of inclusion of the disenfranchised and the underrepresented in our community.

Her contributions to our community were recently acknowledged in March of 2005, when she was honored as a Pioneer at Miami-Dade County's "In The Company of Women" Awards—a distinction previously bestowed on the likes of former Congresswoman Carrie Meek and U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, among others.

Her Catholic faith was the source of inspiration and motivation for her reaching out to the downtrodden—as evidenced by her commitment early on at LEASA Industries to employ hard-to-place and at-risk residents.

"They're God's people, too—and are in need of a second or third-chance in life . . . if we can't help them, then who will . . ." is often the stance that defined her commitment to the community she so loved.

Einez Yap was truly a woman of active compassion and a leader in our community,

and her passing is a heavy blow to our community. I know I speak for all my colleagues in extending our deepest sympathy and condolences to her husband, George Yap, and son Andrew.

HEAD START REAUTHORIZATION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the goal of Head Start has always been to help young children in low-income families, specifically those below the poverty line, prepare for school. Head Start has focused its resources on the children most in need, and has been successful in narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. Today, we can correct a problem in Head Start and ensure that it serves all the children it was intended to.

The poverty thresholds were developed in the early 1960s and at that time statistics showed that families typically spent one-third of their income on food. The thresholds were designed to take the costs of the Department of Agriculture's economy food plan for families and multiply the costs by a factor of three. Currently, the calculations of the poverty line for Head Start are adjusted by the Consumer Price Index annually to account for the growth in prices. Unfortunately, the current calculation leaves important factors out of the calculation of the poverty line.

Adjusting only for changes in price growth ignores the reality that times have changed. It is not 1965. Today, families are much more likely to spend significant portions of their income on housing. It is more likely that both parents will be working full time jobs. Both childcare costs and the likelihood that a family will need it have also increased.

Additionally, the failure to adjust the poverty line as wages have grown now means that families in poverty today are worse off relative to the typical family than families in poverty were 40 years ago. For instance, the threshold for a family of four, when the poverty thresholds were first introduced—\$18,810 in 2003 dollars—was 42 percent of the median income of a family that size. By 2003, the value of the poverty threshold for a family of four had fallen to 35.7 percent. Adjusting only for changes in price growth for the past 40 years has slowly eroded the group of intended recipients. Now we are left with families in need of assistance whose children are not even eligible for Head Start.

This amendment seeks to bridge the gap that has been created and ensure that it will not be created again in the future. Currently, the 2005 poverty line for a family of 3 is \$16,090. By tying the poverty line to wage growth, rather than price growth, the poverty line for a family of 3 would become \$19,610. The increase in the poverty line produced by this change by no means raises eligibility to include every child who could benefit from Head Start. But this adjustment will significantly help the families who should have been eligible all along. It is a step in the right direction; the direction of ensuring that the working poor are given the help they need to survive.

This committee is not only charged with ensuring that Head Start programs are per-

forming well but with ensuring that they are serving all the children they were intended to. This amendment will help to ensure that children do not continue to be left behind. I urge my colleagues on the Committee on Education and Workforce to join me in supporting my amendment.

TO HONOR MS. EMMA TORRES

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize an amazing woman from my district, Emma Torres from Yuma, Arizona. She is a role model and inspiration for all; her work and dedication was recently recognized, internationally, when she was honored by Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the Ohtli Award. This award acknowledges her contributions to the development of Hispanic communities and for her support in social causes. The Ohtli award is given to distinguished Hispanic leaders who devote their lives promoting and fostering the prosperity of communities in the United States. The word Ohtli means "righteous path" in Nahuatl.

Emma has been a strong border community leader and health advocate for migrant and seasonal farm workers in Western Arizona for more than 20 years. After losing her husband to leukemia in 1982, she turned a personal and painful life experience into a mission to enhance the quality of life of farm workers. She co-founded and is the current Executive Director of Campesinos Sin Fronteras, a grassroots, community-based organization that uses education and advocacy to improve the standard of living for farm workers. Prior to her current position, she was the Field Office Director for Puentes de Amistad/Bridges in Friendship under the leadership of the Arizona Border Health Foundation. In 2004, President George W. Bush appointed Emma to the US/Mexico Border Health Binational Commission.

She has pioneered the Lay Health Worker/Promotora Model in Arizona since 1987, and as a certified Inter-Cultural Affairs (ICA) facilitator has led efforts to bring adequate healthcare coverage to our most vulnerable populations.

Most recently Emma accomplished one of her personal dreams—she received her degree in social work from Northern Arizona University. This is the latest of recognitions for Emma's commitment, persistence, and belief in improving one's personal life and that of one's community.

Emma's life is an example to others; pursue one's dreams, believe in making change, be strong, and progress will prevail.

TRIBUTE TO MS. JACQUELINE H. SMITH, NORTH MIAMI BEACH COUNCILWOMAN

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Ms. Jacqueline H. Smith, North